10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

141 Young people of both sexes are attractive and ro
[146] but hard work, undernourishment and, in the case of women, constant child-bearing often make them ap old when they have only reached what should be the p of life.

591 Family life among the Karens is not unlike tha
428 the ordinary European family. They do not have
596 patriarchial family system of the Chinese, and each mar couple usually has its own house in which to live. O the woman brings her young husband to live with parents and he inherits their lands on their dece

● 582 Marriage in the early days was strictly within the tr
163 Even marriage with those of other Karen tribes was loo
165 down upon. Karen women usually bear as many as or more children, but often raise less than half of th

858 due to their lack of knowledge of sanitation. Ka
888 fathers are usually fond of their children and take as g care of them as they know how. Their love is gener sentimental and children are allowed to rule the hou hold. Old people usually receive good care for the Kar always reverence age.

IV

OCCUPATIONS

243 In the early days the Karens were concerned w
433 wresting a living for themselves from the ground wh they lived. Almost without exception they were cu vators of the soil and raised rice, their principal foo They followed the two methods usually found in Burm the mountain method in the hills and the paddy-fi method on the plains.

243 In the hills the wasteful way of cultivating rice w that of clearing a section, called in Burmese a *taung-*

10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1 Burma
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177 181 797 them a language that might denationalize them. But when they sought outside teachers who would instruct them in English, the missionaries agreed to carry on schools in that language, and there grew up the Anglo-Vernacular system (English combined with the vernaculars, Burmese and Karen) that reached up to the 153 871 University with its degrees. Karen students usually are slower to grasp new ideas than Burmans, but they often retain them better and have been, in proportion to their numbers, just as good students as any other race in the country. When they get over their reticence and fears they seem to be able to succeed in any endeavour for which they have the aptitude.

186 ● 582 The Karens are often accused of being clannish. They are, but it is their natural self-interest which leads them to cling to each other for protection from their more powerful neighbours. For the same reason they condemn marriage outside the tribe.

181 152 101 Although physically the Karen seems to an outsider closely to resemble the Burman, he has many very different racial characteristics which make it difficult for the two peoples to understand each other. The Burman is much like his own national emblem, the peacock, given to show and to a great appreciation of fine feathers. He likes to do things quickly and not too thoroughly. He watches those whom he desires to please and caters to their tastes. He uses many honorifics and is diplomatic in his language and manner. He often wears a silk *longyi* of dainty colours over a body that is rough and unwashed.

The Karen wears his dirty clothes over his unwashed person and feels that the two go together. He cares nothing for personal appearance. He is abrupt in his

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

CHAPTER XIX

MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

584 582 In the early days it appears that a young man did not marry until he was twenty-five or thirty years of age. His parents, deciding that it was about time for him to have a wife, either arranged with the parents of some maiden or, as was more often the case, confided in some friendly elder and entrusted the matter to him. If they had a preference, they made it known; but not infrequently the mediator was permitted to select whomsoever he might think best. It made no difference whether the young persons had ever met or not. When the subject was broached to them, they usually consented; but if they refused, as they seem to have done sometimes, the proposed arrangement was dropped. The mediator in such an affair was known as the "t' lo pa."

582 186 621 Up to a generation or two ago marriage between a Karen and a member of another race was altogether tabu. This explains why the Karen have maintained their traditions and their social solidarity to so remarkable a degree. Moreover, it was an almost invariable rule among the Karen that the young woman should belong to the same tribe as the youth. Even to this day one who marries into another tribe is looked at a little askance and is spoken of as having married outside ("pgha htaw leu hko"). It was not uncommon for relatives, usually second or third cousins, to wed. First cousins very rarely married. In Shewegyin if a girl was a relative of the man, she must belong to his generation, that is, they must be first, second, or third cousins, as the case might be. She might be an inhabitant of the same village as her spouse or of another. While it was more common for the parents of the young man to begin the negotiations for a wedding, it was not a rare occurrence for the parents of a girl of marriageable age to begin them.

584 582 Child betrothals were not uncommon in the early days. Two families, who were on very intimate terms and desirous of prolonging their intimacy indefinitely, would arrange to have their children marry. Even young couples, who as yet had no children, would agree that, if favored by fortune, a marriage should take place be-

19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

tween their hoped-for offspring, although such an agreement might be made at any time during the growth of the children. Such a pact was considered firmly binding on those concerned. The children might or might not be told of the arrangement. Later on, at any rate, the youth would learn of it; and it was expected, when the proper time came, that he would seek out his betrothed, even if she was then living in a distant village. Thra Than Bya tells of a couple who were thus affianced while living on the banks of the Irrawaddy River. During hard times the girl's parents removed from one place to another, until at length they settled near Moulmein. When the youth had reached man's estate, his father told him of his engagement and sent him to seek his betrothed. Knowing only her name and that of her father, he traced them from village to village until, arriving at the place where they then dwelt, the chief confirmed the fact and consented to the young man's entering into a rhyming contest with the maiden, when she should arrive at the feast that was being held there. Retiring into the jungle, the youth got himself up in disheveled array, returned, and addressed the damsel in poetic language, explaining briefly his mission. She repelled his attentions; but he persisted, saying that she belonged to him by right of their childhood betrothal. Thereupon she besought her parents to save her from such an undesirable husband. They imposed the condition that she should surpass him in the rhyming contest. Failing in the attempt, she humbled herself and invited him to her house, where her parents proceeded to celebrate her wedding with a great feast.[1]

Feasts, especially funeral-feasts, were the occasions at which youths and maidens met. They used to go to such gatherings in companies, each with its leader who was skilled in reciting or extemporizing simple verses. Being thus thrown together, couples often became engaged, pledging themselves in verses like the following:

Youth: "I promise you, you promise me.
We have promised each other."

Maiden: "After you have promised me and do not come,
Cotton will grow on your grave.
If you agree and do not come,
Paddy will grow over your tomb."

[1] In the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* for 1868, Dr. Mason mentions similar customs as existing among the Karen of Tenasserim.

19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
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served their tabus they prospered, but when they neglected them they suffered adversity, it is alleged.

Marriage of a Karen with a person of another race was formerly strictly forbidden. This exclusiveness kept the racial stock pure and unmixed. In recent times the prohibition has not been rigorously enforced. Hence, the barriers between the Karen on the one hand and the Burmese and Shan on the other have been somewhat weakened, betokening—it must be confessed—a moral looseness that was unknown before. The village elders have always maintained that marriages outside of the tribe ("taw leu hko") were not good, although such unions have not been lately tabued. Marriages between members of the same tribe or of the same village, providing the parties concerned are not more closely related than cousins, are permitted. To marry a relative closer than a cousin would be incest, and all the tribes forbid such unions. On the day of a wedding in a village the inhabitants are forbidden to labor.

Adultery and fornication are under strict tabu, except in the Red Karen tribe,[2] the belief among the other tribes being that these sins are offensive to the "Bgha" [3] and destroy the productiveness of the fields, the "Lords of the earth" withholding their favor from the crops when they find that such deeds have been committed. In making their annual feast to these deities, the Bwe tribe formerly required those who had been guilty of uncleanness during the year to confess their sins and did not permit them to come near the sacrificial altars.

A number of prohibitions are connected with birth. One of the Sgaw precepts forbids pregnant women to eat the flesh of the curious monkey-tiger *(Ictides ater)*, bitter herbs, and the long smooth pod called alligator's tongue. Before the men adopted the modern fashion of wearing their hair short, the husband of a woman who was with child was not permitted to trim his locks, for fear of shortening the life of his expected offspring. During the first six days following a birth the custom of the Paduang denies to the father the right of associating or even speaking with any one, except his own family. He alone cares for the mother and child during the period named.[4] The purpose of thus secluding the father is to prevent the transmission of the danger and weakness

[2] See Dr. Mason's account in the *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1866.

[3] This is true in those localities where the "Bgha" are regarded as the family penates. In other localities, as among the Bwe, the offended powers were the "lords of the earth."

[4] Lieutenant E. W. Carrish, *Report on Bwe Expedition*, 1894-95, p. 22.

[5] E. B. Cross, J. A. O. S. (1854), Vol. IV, 295, ff. and D. C. Gilmore, Journ. Burma

342 The houses of the Padaung, another Karen tribe--1911: 8,516--are quite similar. The [301] Padaung women represent an amusing ethnographical parallel to the African Massai, with their solid heavy brass ornaments and their tremendous collars. Sometimes the Padaung form a village [621] community together with the Yimbaw-Karen (24)

24. About Yimbaw-Karen see UBG, I, 1, p. 524.

as in the villages of Naungswe near Mobye on the Nam Pilu. The place looked cleaner to me than the Karenni villages and their houses were better constructed (Plate VII, 3). A round awning covers the veranda; the single inside room is used for cooking, living, and sleeping. In the center are two fireplaces which are sunk in- [354] to the floor; on both sides are sleeping accommodations. Alongside the wall the floor is raised to form a low platform where vessels and all sorts of implements are kept. At the rear, to the right, a bamboo screen, reaching half way to [514] the ceiling, partitions off a kind of toilet which is an opening in the floor.

101 The Gaungto--(Sawng-tung-Zayein-) Karen--
161 1911: 4,981--belong to a tribal group where
●582 more or less severe endogamic marriage rules limit the establishment of families, and this in turn has resulted in a steady decrease of the population. Consequently, one frequently finds in their villages a large number of old maids and bachelors who were unable to find suitable mates for themselves. For example, I counted in one little village, consisting only of six houses, not more than four married couples, and their families. In addition, there was one widow, and four girls and four bachelors who, because of lack of money or because of the marriage rules, had to remain single.

344 The bachelor house, a customary institution
883

23: Benedict
184, 192, 582, 591, 602, 611, 613, 614, 616, 618, 621

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/For lists of kinship terms, and for excellent and detailed information concerning correlations between kinship terminology, patterns of behavior, and social institutions, see category 601./